



Scamper

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A RAND McNALLY ELF BOOK



Scamper

By Marjorie Barrows

Illustrated by Jean Tamburine



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Scamper was the littlest squirrel in all Ferny Forest. And he was brave, too.

One day he came home from playing whisker tag with his friends. He looked at the big trees all around him and wagged his bushy tail this way and that.

"*Chee-chee-chee-cheep!*" he cried. "Where's Mommy? Where's Daddy? And where, oh, where's my home?"

Chucky Chipmunk poked her head out of the bushes.

"Hi, Scamper!" she said. "While you were away some men came and cut down your tree. They have taken it in a truck to the lumber mill to cut up into logs."

No more home! Scamper looked sadly at Chucky with his big glowing eyes. His bushy tail went *swish*. But he did not say a word.



Willy Woodchuck poked his head out of the bushes.

"Hi, Scamper!" he said. "Your mommy and daddy are out searching for another tree with a nice southern exposure. A tree for your new nest, you know, with a hole in it for your winter pantry!"

Scamper looked and looked at Willy with his big glowing eyes. His bushy tail went *swish, swish*. But still he did not say a word.

Oscar Owl was doing his daily dozen close by. "One-hooo! Two-hooo!" he cried, flapping his wings up and down. "You won't give a hoot for what I say, Scamper. But how can you find any nuts for your new pantry this late in the fall? My



feathers! How will you eat this winter?" And he turned his head around and around.

This time Scamper *did* say something as his bushy tail went swish, swish, swish. "Chee-cheer up!" he chattered. "I'll find a way."

Scamper skittered alone into the Big Woods.



He whisked up a beech tree and came part way down again, head first. Then he thought and thought and thought until his whiskers quivered. He always thought better upside down. A bunny hopped out to watch him. But Scamper did not notice the bunny. He did not even notice the little birds who were

following him. "*Chee-cheer up!*" he said suddenly. "I've got an idea!"

Skitter-skitter-skitter went Scamper, deep into the Big Woods.

"I'll try to find which way the men's truck went," he said to himself.



But the Big Woods were getting darker and darker. He stopped to look at a big queer footprint on the ground before him. "What's this?" he said shakily. Was it the footprint of a man, a horse, a fox, or a WOLF?



Scamper climbed up a high tree and leaped from one branch to another, just to feel brave again.

"*Hooooooo!* Whoooo knows what you'll find in the Big Woods?" cried a queer voice suddenly. It was Oscar Owl again! "A hoot in time saves nine,

little squirrel. It makes my feathers stand on end to find you here. Come back!"

"Hold your hoots! And keep your claws out of my business!" whispered Scamper to himself. But out loud he just said politely, "*Chee-cheer* up! I'm all right!"



Skitter-skitter-skitter-skitter went Scamper, on and on and on. He went uphill. He went downhill. And he followed the truck tracks on the ground.

Pretty soon it began to rain. *Whirrrr!* Pretty soon it began to lightning. *FLASH!* Pretty soon it began to thunder. *BOOM!*

But Scamper kept on going, as well as he could. "Chee-cheer up!" he chattered softly to himself. "Chee-cheer up!"

At last the storm was over. And Scamper came out of the Big Woods into Sunny Meadow. Here there were singing birds. Here there were bright-colored flowers. And here—what do you suppose Scamper found? The truck full of chopped-down trees—and *his* tree with his winter pantry hole was right on top!



The truck was deserted. The men were eating their dinner in the next field. So poor, tired Scamper worked fast.

In three leaps and two jerks he was down the tree hole. In just a blink he was out again with two



nuts in each cheek. Beechnuts, hickory nuts, pine seeds, and acorns—hundreds and hundreds of them! Scamper brought them all out, two by two, and poked them into a tree with a hole in it at the edge of Sunny Meadow!



At last he lay down flat and fanned himself with his tail.

Just then he heard a noise.

"Hoooooooooo? Scamper? Here he is!" cried Oscar Owl. "The rascal!"



"Chee-chee-chee, oh, thank you!" cried Scamper's mommy.

"Thank you very much for showing us where our child is!" added Scamper's daddy.

Scamper ran over to Mommy and Daddy.



"Here's a fine tree for our home!" he cried. "Nice southern exposure and nice pantry! And look, Mommy—look, Daddy! Inside are *all of our own nuts!* I found them and I put them in there all by myself."

Then Mommy Squirrel gave her little son a kiss on the tip of his nose.

Then Scamper's daddy whisked a proud tear from his eye. "*Chee-chee-chee!* Three cheers for Scamper!" he cried.

And everyone was glad again.





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